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Immigration agents detain 2 people on school grounds in Baltimore, sparking backlash

10 HR AGO

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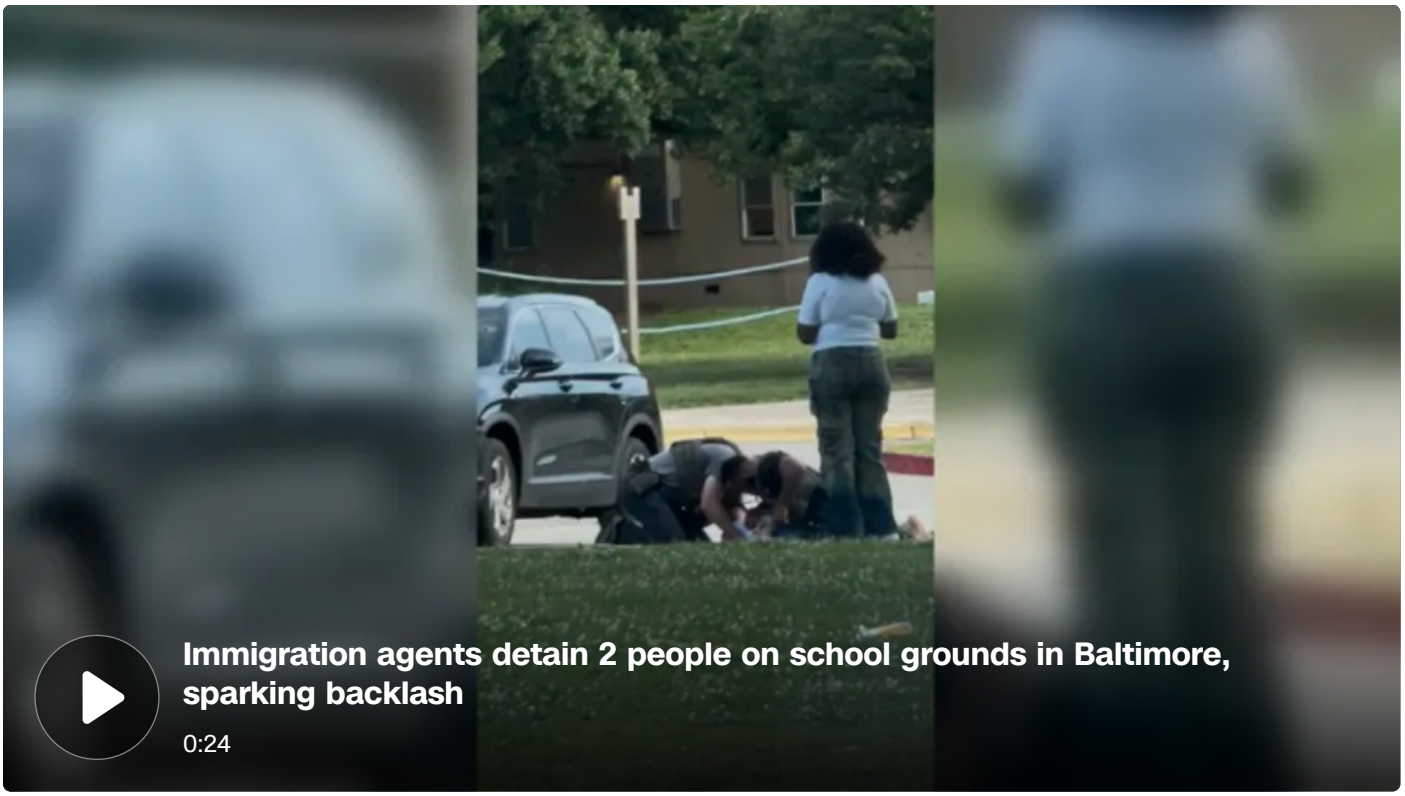

The detainment of two people by immigration agents outside a Baltimore school as preparations were underway for kindergarten and pre-k promotion ceremonies Thursday morning has fueled backlash from school and state officials.

Immigration agents had been pursuing an undocumented immigrant who was accompanied by his family and drove into the parking lot of Commodore John Rodgers Elementary/Middle school, where agents pulled the parents from the car, authorities and witnesses said.

Small children, some holding hands, hurried past the scene in their colorful backpacks during drop-off time as agents in vests with the words “ICE” and “police” on them detained a woman who was in an SUV with a shattered window, video shows. She was then led away with her hands appearing restrained behind her back.

Agents also struggled with a man on the ground and restrained him, according to another video taken by a driver who described children screaming as they watched.

Educators rushed to the SUV of the two people being detained and took two children who were in the backseat into the school to try and protect them, Maryland state Sen. Bill Ferguson said in a video on **Facebook**, calling the incident “truly unconscionable.”

The children are now in the custody of their aunt, according to the Department of Homeland Security, after their parents were provided an opportunity to contact a relative.

DHS spokesperson Lauren Bis told CNN in a statement that the man, identified as Jesus Acevedo-Sanchez, “refused lawful commands, violently resisted arrest, and used his vehicle to evade law enforcement, dragging an ICE officer in the process.”

He’s facing federal charges for resisting and impeding federal officers, and destruction of government property, according to Bis, who said ICE had previously encountered Acevedo in April. The other individual in the vehicle is facing charges for assaulting a federal officer.

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CNN is working to determine whether Acevedo-Sanchez has legal representation.

It was unclear Thursday afternoon whether the family involved in the ICE incident was affiliated with the school in any way, Baltimore City Public Schools spokesperson Sherry Christian said Thursday, before DHS identified Acevedo-Sanchez. CNN reached out for more information.

“ICE leadership coordinated with school officials and the Governor’s Office to ensure the situation was resolved safely and with minimal disruption to the community,” Bis said.

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore called the incident “disturbing” and said his administration had been in touch with Immigration and Customs Enforcement leadership about what unfolded and why it occurred on school grounds.

ICE was “apologetic” to state and school officials about the arrest happening on school grounds, noting that the circumstances led them there, a source familiar with the incident told CNN.

“To be clear: ICE does not target schools, but we will not allow criminals to hide in our nation’s schools and put the safety of children at risk,” Bis said.

Van driver describes students screaming

The incident happened around 8 a.m. ET as families were dropping off students and arriving on campus for the end-of-year promotion ceremony, Baltimore City Public Schools spokesperson Sherry Christian said.

A man is seen being detained Thursday outside a Baltimore school. *(Jude Castellanos)*

Jude Castellanos, who drives for an independent school transportation system, said her minivan was carrying around 10 children ranging from first grade to fifth grade students when the incident was unfolding.

She recorded video of the agents trying to detain the man on the ground while the children looked on, terrified and screaming, she told CNN.

“They were like, ‘oh, they’re gonna arrest us. They’re gonna take us,’” Castellanos said.

Almost immediately, teachers came to the van and escorted the students inside the school, Castellanos said, adding it made the children feel more secure.

Castellanos posted video of the incident and said she received a flurry of calls from parents who were scared to go to the school for the pre-K promotion.

“I’m completely shocked because I’ve seen this in the streets, but I’ve never seen this inside of a parking lot in a school,” she said.

In a **letter** to the school community, principal Marc Martin said he was “deeply

disappointed” that the enforcement activity occurred on school grounds and officials are seeking “clear assurances” that something like that does not occur again.

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“While some members of our school community were significantly impacted, students and staff who were not involved remain safe, and we continued with our scheduled activities, despite the disruption,” Martin wrote in the letter.

Baltimore Mayor Brandon Scott said in a **post on X** he reached out to offer assistance to the affected family, the school and “federal authorities to express our anger at this arrest occurring on school grounds.”

“Schools are places where children should feel safe, where parents should be able to drop off their kids without fear, and where educators should be able to focus on teaching — not where federal agents carry out immigration enforcement actions in front of children,” the governor said in a statement.

CNN’s Taylor Romine contributed to this report.

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